Daily Eagle

THESPIAN FISTS.

How and Why They Pattered on Freeman's Face.

A TRAGEDY IN THREE ROUNDS.

Comedian Francis Wilson and Manager Rudolph Aronson's Twenty-Two Chorus Girls—A Story of Contracts, Dismissals, Reinstatements, Pugilism, Black Eyes and More Contracts.

Few men are gifted with such diverse talents as is Francis Wilson. That he is a good actor thousands of people who have seen him in "Erminie" can testify. That he is an all around pugilist of no ordinary prowess, Max Freeman, stage manager, doesn't have to testify—his face shows it. Wilson is a lucky man.

The trouble, indicated in the foregoing paragraph, originated in Mr. Wilson's unquenchable thirst for glory and gold. He is now, and has been for a couple of years or so, in the employ of Mr. Rudolph Aronson, of the New York Casino, but next summer he proposes to start out for himself with an opera called "The Oolah."

He evidently decided recently that a chorus girl on the list was worth two chorus girls not on the list, and proceeded to make sure that after he had bought the tights for "The Oolah" next summer he would have some one to wear them. This he did by signing for the summer season twenty-two of Mr. Aronson's "Nadjy" chorus, which was then singing in Chicago, and was under contract for the winter season only. Mr. Aronson, on hearing of it, immediately discharged the chorus girls (or, at least, the newspapers say he did). Mr. Wilson and Miss Marie Jansen, who takes the part of "Nadjy," and seems to be a friend in need, immediately wired Mr. Aronson that they wouldn't play unless Mr. Aronson reinstated the chorus singers. Mr. Aronson is a very brave man, but in this case he considered discretion the better part of valor. So he reinstated the girls, and the performance for that night went off without a break. The next day, however, the stage manager, Mr. Max Freeman, notified the twenty-two chorus girls that they would be discharged at the end of four weeks if they didn't sign with Mr. Aronson for the summer season, thus breaking their contracts with Mr. Wilson. Chorus girls are notoriously fickle, and twenty of them transferred their affections—at any rate their contracts—to Mr. Aronson, the discreet. Two alone stood firm.

FRANCIS WILSON.

This little incident caused Mr. Francis Wilson to wax very wroth. He said something not exactly complimentary to Mr. Freeman about it, and Mr. Freeman didn't take the trouble to make a soft answer, because, as he is a very large man, and Mr. Wilson is a very small man, he didn't consider it necessary.

Whiz! bang! whack! Mr. Wilson had done Mr. Freeman up with neatness and dispatch. Mr. Freeman protested and Mr. Wilson danced a jig on Mr. Freeman's waistcoat. Mr. Freeman swore, and Mr. Wilson smiled and changed the step. Mr. Freeman submitted and Mr. Wilson desisted.

These few occurrences have not tended to perpetuate that feeling of brotherly affection which is said to have formerly existed between Mr. Aronson and Mr. Wilson. Their hate is said to be something rarely equaled. Mr. Aronson says that as Mr. Freeman has three artificial fingers and is otherwise unfit for active service in a war of the kind above described, Mr. Wilson ought to be ashamed of himself. Mr. Wilson says he'd like to see him do it.

There are two sides to every story. According to Mr. Wilson's friends Mr. Aronson's threat to discharge the twenty-two chorus girls who had signed contracts to appear with Mr. Wilson's company, is but one of many things which Mr. Aronson has done to annoy and embarrass Mr. Wilson. Mr. Aronson's friends say, however, that Mr. Wilson had no right to go among Mr. Aronson's employes and try to get them to join another company, as, they say, such action on Mr. Wilson's part would naturally tend toward demoralization in Mr. Aronson's company.

RUDOLPH ARONSON.

The affair has created a great stir in the theatrical world, and the profession is about equally divided as to the merits of the case. Outside of the profession it is commented on to a much greater extent than such little matters usually are, and, singularly enough, all Chicago seems to sympathize with Mr. Wilson, while all New York has apparently ranged itself on the side of Mr. Aronson and Mr. Freeman. Some New Yorkers have even gone so far as to intimate that they thought the whole affair had been cooked up by Mr. Wilson with malice aforethought, and carried out as an advertising dodge. It certainly has attracted a great deal of attention to Mr. Wilson, and he should feel duly grateful to Mr. Freeman for the amiable way in which he, Mr. Freeman, stood up and allowed himself to be knocked down. It has also proved a boon for newspaper correspondents. The New York Herald's Chicago man wired the following description of the battle to his paper:

Round 1.—Wilson warm under the collar. Freeman scared. Wilson let out with right, reaching Freeman's optic before the latter could throw up his guard. Freeman went to grass (or mud, for the alley was very dirty) and Wilson smiled. Time, 40 seconds.

Round 2.—Freeman groggy. Wilson still warmer. The comedian, without waiting for his adversary to collect his thoughts, "pasted" him again, and Freeman once more went to mud. Time, 80 seconds.

Round 3.—Wilson changed his tactics and let Freeman have it in the stomach. Freeman sat down on a stone and cried. Time, 15 seconds.

That the encounter with Mr. Freeman is not Mr. Wilson's first experience in the fistic arena is shown by a conversation with one of his friends, which was reported by The New York Sun. The friend is quoted as saying:

"Wilson is, above all, a man of extraordinary determination. It is the dominant trait of his character. When he was on the variety stage he had a partner, whose name for the moment escapes me, and they did a song and dance act. His partner was a rough and violent sort of a man, and in the course of time he and Wilson had a row. Thereupon the partner pounded Mr. Wilson with great vigor and force. Wilson decided to get even. He began to look after his diet, took long walks, did a little running in the early morning, and generally built up his muscle. After a time, whenever he went to a big city, like New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago, he quietly picked out the best boxing master in the town and practiced with him carefully while he was in the city. He kept it up month after month. He is naturally very strong, and is a man of great physical courage. His partner knew nothing about the measures he was taking to perfect himself in the art of sparring. One night the quarrel between the two men broke out again. I think it was in Milwaukee. They were in a big room on the fifth story of the hotel, and just as the quarrel reached its apex Wilson locked the door, threw the key out of the window, peeled off his coat and waistcoat and pushed the table and chairs near the wall. His partner watched the preparations with a smile of contempt and derision, but the smile was of short duration. Something happened to the smile. It was always a question whether it was hit in the left hand corner or square in the middle, but when Mr. Wilson's fist dropped upon it there was havoc. The partner arose and went for Mr. Wilson, but this time he had tackled a scientific, thoroughly trained and intelligent fighter. If anybody doubts it let him ask the partner. No man speaks of Mr. Wilson's skill as he does at present. When the porters opened the door and took him out of the room with the aid of Mr. Wilson, it was the general opinion that he had been handled in a thoroughly scientific and effective fashion. The partnership was dissolved, and Francis Wilson, the variety actor, became Francis Wilson, the comedian. He is today a superb athlete, a man of remarkable knowledge of literature and the drama, speaks French and German perfectly, stands head and shoulders intellectually above the majority of the young comedians of America, has a fortune of $100,000 or more, and altogether is a unique figure in American theatrical life. These are facts. I have been a friend of Wilson's for twelve years and know whereof I speak."

GEORGE S. KNIGHT.

The Well Known Actor Who Was Recently Stricken with Disease.

What strange fancies sick men sometimes have, and to what peculiar causes is sometimes attributed the final break down of minds which have perhaps been running at high pressure. Mrs. George S. Knight, whose real name, by the way, is Mrs. George S. Sloan, attributes the breaking down of her husband to the failure of his play, "Baron Rudolph," upon which he based hopes of future greatness. He thought so much of this piece and his part in it that he had a $15,000 picture painted representing himself in one of the scenes. On several occasions she found him in his room admiring the picture and declaiming his lines to it. Once, as they were about leaving for the west to accept a remunerative engagement, and when they had their trunks packed and were about to start for the train, they were compelled to miss it because he insisted upon reopening the trunks and placing therein a dilapidated shoe that he wore in his play. His wife says, also, that on occasions when they were to play "Over the Garden Wall," which always drew well, he would insist upon placing "Baron Rudolph" on the stage, and would thus lose all the money they had made with the more successful play.

GEORGE S. KNIGHT.

He attributed these losses to a change in a situation of the play. Bronson Howard wrote the play originally, and the plot represented the heroine as leaving her husband and going to live in the home of a former lover, without having been married to him. This situation, he thought, did not take with the audiences, and he had David Belasco change it so that the wife married the former lover.

This scene did not take, and from that time Mr. Knight seemed to get worse.

George S. Knight began on the stage as a variety actor under the name of George Sloan (which, by the way, is his real name). About ten years ago he married Miss Sophie Worrell, of the famous Worrell sisters. The marriage estranged Miss Worrell from her relatives for the time being, but finally, upon the birth of her first child, her relatives became reconciled, and have ever since been good friends.

SPORTING NOTES.

The recent meeting of the American Union of Amateur Athletes in Madison Square garden, New York, was a notable event. George R. Gray, the wonderful Canadian, put the 24 pound shot 23 feet, 9¼ inches, and M. O'Sullivan threw the 56 pound weight 13 feet, 11¼ inches. The best previous record with the 24 pound shot was made by George Ross, of Scotland, and was 27 feet, 11 inches. O'Sullivan beat the 56 pound weight record by 2¼ inches.

Ex-President F. K. Stearns, of the Detroit club, in speaking of his withdrawal from the League, said that although he was glad to get rid of the worry that is attached to a baseball club, he was very sorry to part with such fine men as those representing the League club. Mr. Stearns has only five shares in the new International association club from Detroit, and he will have no say as to how it shall be run.

Jem Carney, the English light weight pugilist, who fought a draw with Jack McAuliffe in this country, has issued a challenge to again fight McAuliffe according to the rules of the London prize ring, for £500 or £1,000 a side, the diamond belt, which McAuliffe now holds, and the championship of the world. Carney agrees to give expenses to fight in France, or will accept expenses for the fight to take place in America.

The yacht Eureka, on which Mr. John A. Secor, of the Secor Marine Propeller company, has been experimenting for some time, was built to obtain a maximum speed with a minimum expense, and it is claimed that she can go from twenty to thirty miles an hour at one-tenth of the cost expended at present on steam vessels. The experiments were begun in 1885 and have been continued up to the present time at a very considerable outlay. The Eureka is 100 feet long and has twelve feet beam.

The challenge issued by Charles Mitchell to "Jack" Dempsey is much talked about by sporting men. The general opinion is that the quarreling pugilists will meet before long either in a public or private match and settle their grievances. Mitchell's offer is $1,000 to Dempsey if he stands up before him for eight rounds in a boxing bout. If Dempsey does this, then Mitchell says he will meet Dempsey in a ring fight to a finish for $10,000 a side.

HOOF BEATS.

Messrs. John A. & A. H. Morris, of Westchester, N. Y., have imported the thoroughbred English horse Vagabond, foaled 1884, by Adventurer, dam Irma.

McEwen, the handsome 3-year-old, by Curtis' Hambletonian, out of Mary M., has reduced his record over the Nashville track to 2:25¼.

The governor elect of Connecticut, Morgan G. Bulkely, is a well known lover of horses.

Saint Germain and His Goose.

For several years the French actor Saint Germain has been in the habit of walking about Paris with a tame goose that followed him everywhere like a dog. Recently, says The Stage, the popular comedian stopped to examine some books at a bookstall in the Rue Faubourg Montmartre. A stranger passing by jostled him. The goose, with a hiss! hiss! hiss! snapped at the stranger and pulled the end of his nose off. The commissary de police fined him one franc and prohibited him from walking about with his goose.

FAIR FENCERS.

Women Who Wield the Foil and Wear the Mask.

AN EXERCISE GROWING IN FAVOR

How Ladies Are Taught to Swing the Slender Swords and Fight According to the Code—A Pleasant and Beneficial Pastime—In a New York School.

It has been remarked by a man who ought to know, that there are many American women who could make it very warm for the most expert French swordsman. Fencing has become something more than a "fad" among many young ladies in this country. It has become an art, and, what is more significant, has become a very popular amusement. Schools have been established in many of the cities, and pupils are neither scarce nor dull.

There is every reason why fencing should be encouraged among young women, and no reason for its discouragement. First of all, it arouses an interest in physical exercise and develops what in most young women are so sadly neglected—the muscles. Second—and this is something which no young woman will fail to read with interest—it teaches graceful tread and carriage, and beautifies by filling in the figure where it should be filled in and reducing it where it should be reduced.

READY FOR BUSINESS.

One teacher in New York has his pupils go through the motions in time to music; indeed, they preface their day's exercise by singing a fencing song, which fills the great hall with fierce music, and sounds like the war cry of Amazons who are about to go in search of enemies of their king. After the song the music quickens, and on go the masks like a flash. (They are made of wire and protect the face from possible false strokes.) The fencers then stand in rows facing each other, the opponent of each fencer being the opposite girl. They are dressed in skirts that reach the knee only, the costume being completed by a tight fitting bodice, and red woolen stockings. Presto! they strike the preliminary posture, each one watching with eager eye the movements of her opponent, prepared to either give or take.

VANQUISHED.

In an instant they are at it. The slender steel foils clash in air—uppercut, undercut, thrust, in quick succession, and sparks fly freely until one or the other is vanquished. Before the master gives the word for a cessation of hostilities, the perspiration is flowing freely on their faces, but they have no time to use their handkerchiefs. Suddenly, at a word from the master, the din ceases and the line breaks, to form again after a few minutes' rest. Among the pupils in that school there is but one whose arms are not rounded and smooth and whose figure is not well filled and willowy. She is a beginner.

Changes in League Rules.

The following changes in rules were made by the National Baseball league, during the recent meeting in New York: The sacrifice hit was defined as a hit of any kind that was not a fair hit that moved a man up a base.

Substitutes—One player, whose name shall be printed on the score card as an extra player, may be substituted at the end of any completed inning by either club, but the player retired shall not hereafter participate in the game. The tenth man can be put in the game at any time on an even inning. When a player is hurt, the tenth man need not be put in. If he is, the club forfeits all right of having a substitute on the field.

The only change in the definition of a dead ball is that the umpire must be standing on foul ground if the ball strikes any part of his person or clothing.

A foul tip is defined as follows: "A foul hit not rising above the batsman's head and caught by the catcher, playing within ten feet of the home base, shall be termed a foul tip."

A new rule entitling a batter to his base is as follows: "If upon a fair hit the ball strikes the person or clothing of the umpire on fair ground."

Pertaining to bases, an amendment to rule 51 permits a runner to return to his base after an umpire has declared a foul without any regard to touching the bases. A runner shall return to his base "if the person or clothing of the umpire is struck by a ball thrown by the catcher to intercept the base runner."

In defining the powers of an umpire to impose a fine of not less than $5 or more than $25 for abusive, threatening or improper language to the umpire an amendment was made as follows: "A repetition of the offense shall subject such player to a removal from the game and the immediate substitution of another player then in uniform."

An additional base hit is provided "when a batted ball hits the person or clothing of the umpire standing on fair ground."

It is provided that in the fourth column of the tabulated score "shall be placed each sacrifice hit, which shall be credited to the player who shall advance a runner a base on a hit other than a base hit."

A salary schedule was also made out. The section containing it reads:

The compensation for all League players for services as players shall be limited, regulated and determined by the classification and grade to which such players may be assigned by the secretary of the League, after the termination of the championship season, as follows:

Class A, compensation $2,500.
Class B, compensation $2,250.
Class C, compensation $2,000.
Class D, compensation $1,750.
Class E, maximum compensation $1,500.

This section will not prohibit the payment of extra compensation for the services of one person to each club as field captain or team manager.

An Occult Power.

He—I don't know what it is, by Jove!
That seems to draw me to you, love!

She—But don't you think this subtle charm
Is, after all, dear Jack, your arm?
—New York Evening World.

At the Museum.

Visitor (to freak)—Why, I don't see anything unusual about you. In what respect are you a curiosity?

Freak—I am a milkman who never mentions the weather.—Yenowine's News.

Marriage.

Is marriage a failure?
If so, 'twere better
To love a girl
And then not get her.
—Philadelphia Call.